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## Editorial

# Arroyo's relentless schemes to cling to power

**G**loria Arroyo has not run out of dirty and vicious schemes in her mad scramble to look for ways to continue holding power beyond 2010. Whether through cha-cha or elections, she has many tricks up her sleeve. Unfortunately for her, they have all been laid bare.

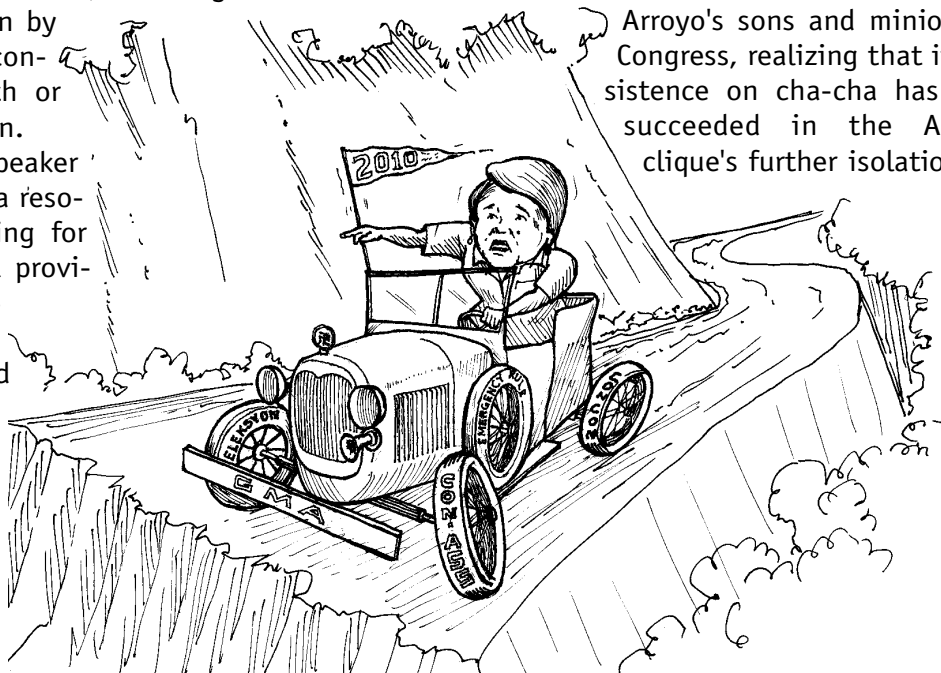
Arroyo's power-hungry minions in Congress have cunningly been pushing cha-cha no matter how many times the people have rejected this scheme and despite the withdrawal of support of a number of her allies. Arroyo's KAMPI party recently boasted that all it needs is 20 more signatures before the formal adoption of a resolution by Rep. Luis Villafrute calling for changes in the 1987 constitution by transforming Congress into a constituent assembly (con-ass) with or without the Senate's participation.

In a related maneuver, Speaker Prospero Nograles has also filed a resolution in the Lower House calling for the abrogation of constitutional provisions forbidding foreign ownership of real estate and businesses in the country. The proposed resolution is being misrepresented as a simple economic measure even if it constitutes a betrayal of the nation's patrimony and interests. He has been pushing for its approval in the Lower House as a piece of ordinary legislation. Its goal is to pave the way

for other bills, mainly those pertaining to changing the form of government from presidential to parliamentary in order to leave the field wide open for Arroyo's assumption to power as prime minister.

Expected objections by the Senate and other organizations and personalities will be swept away by a Supreme Court with an overwhelming majority of justices appointed by Arroyo. Villafrute's bill has a very obvious objective, especially with Arroyo's congressmen-sons Jose Miguel and Diosdado at the forefront of gathering signatures for its approval.

Malacañang has made a show of distancing itself from the schemes hatched by Arroyo's sons and minions in Congress, realizing that its insistence on cha-cha has only succeeded in the Arroyo clique's further isolation. At



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the same time, however, it said that it would not stand in the way of any "initiatives" from the Lower House.

The Comelec, for its part, is trying to look for ways to squeeze in a plebiscite on charter change before or during the 2010 polls, despite having admitted that it was running on a very tight schedule. This is just in case Congress manages to "approve" cha-cha before it adjourns in June and the Supreme Court is able to give its assent at once.

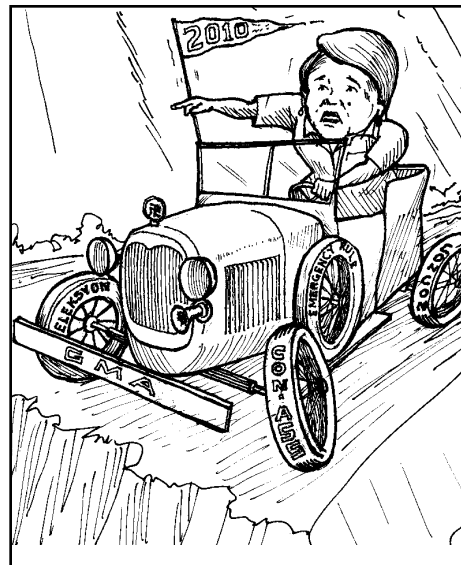
Should Arroyo run out of time to push cha-cha and have no choice but to push through with the 2010 polls, she has other schemes in ready that would be riding on the election fever. One is to support a presidential candidate who will agree to be a figurehead while Arroyo holds the reins of power.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro's name has been floated as a possible candidate of the ruling clique. Teodoro is a nephew of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., one of the biggest comprador bourgeoisie in the country who has been an ally of every ruling regime

since the Marcos era.

In floating Teodoro's name, Arroyo wants Cojuangco's support for the ruling clique to continue. The government has sold its Meralco shares to Cojuangco on very easy terms (he is to pay for the shares by installment and without interest over a period of three years) as a reward for his continued support. The scheme includes a conspiracy between Arroyo and Cojuangco to eventually wrest control of Meralco from the Lopezes to weaken the anti-Arroyo clan's powerful grip over politics and the media. Arroyo had also earlier sold to Cojuangco the government-sequestered 27% shares of the Coconut Producers Federation Inc. in San Miguel Corporation (SMC) to complete Cojuangco's monopoly control over SMC. The only reason why the deal could not go into full swing is the objection filed before the Supreme Court by farmers' groups and other entities opposed to the sale.

In a simultaneous move, Arroyo plans to run for Congress representing one of Pampanga province's districts and have herself elected House Speaker through the majority votes of her minions



in the Lower House. If everything moves according to plan, it will be Arroyo and not Teodoro who will be the country's actual ruler. She will be relying on Teodoro and her allies in Congress to make sure that cha-cha pushes through and paves the way for her formal ascension to power under a parliamentary system. For his part, Teodoro has already declared that cha-cha will be on top of his electoral platform.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales could not help but test the waters regarding this scheme. He has gone on record saying that what the country needs is a "transition president" for a period of two or three years after the end of Arroyo's term who could pave the way for needed changes like cha-cha. The "transition president," he said, must be willing to sacrifice because he would have to step down from power early to give way to the country's new ruler under a parliamentary system. He may not have outrightly mentioned it, but when he spoke of the new ruler, he was clearly referring to Gloria Arroyo.

The scheme, however, is fraught with dangers for Arroyo because there is a great possibility that the Cojuangcos would no longer be content with their role as



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king-makers and may desire to hold power themselves.

Malacañang's other ace up its sleeve is the automated election scheme and the huge possibility of its failure. Automation has been touted as a way of preventing electoral fraud. Progressive scientists and other experts who have looked into the design to be used for automation, however, have said that there were simply too many loop-

holes. It would seem that widespread and systematic fraud was actually built into the design to ensure the victory of the ruling clique's candidates.

Should fraud not be enough to ensure their victory, the Comelec may cite the major, massive confusion that is sure to accompany automation and declare a failure of elections at the national level. This could serve as a "legal" basis for

Arroyo to continue as president until special elections are held or cha-cha is pursued.

Worse, Arroyo could capitalize on the ensuing chaos to declare a state of emergency or outright martial law.

The only way to frustrate these evil schemes is through the broad anti-Arroyo united front's relentless and determined struggle to overthrow the ruling regime. **AB**

*On the occasion of the NPA's 40th anniversary*

## Brilliant victories against Oplan Bantay Laya 2



**T**he New People's Army (NPA) and the entire revolutionary movement once more proved last year that they have the strength and capability to overcome the ruthless attacks of the reactionary regime. The NPA grew in size, took deeper root among the people and enhanced its capability to launch tactical offensives against reactionary armed groups despite the US-Arroyo regime's intensified counterrevolutionary military campaigns.

Following are the reports gathered so far by *Ang Bayan*:

**In Mindanao.** The NPA now operates in more than 2,000 barrios

in 200 towns and cities and 19 provinces all over Mindanao. The number of guerrilla fronts increased from 35 in 2004 to 40 this

year. Not a single guerrilla front was dismantled in spite of the intensified and widespread military operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

From March 2008 to March 2009, Red fighters launched over 300 tactical offensives in the island, seizing 350 firearms. Several regular and paramilitary troops of the AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP), including high-ranking officers surrendered and were taken prisoner by the Red guerrillas. The enemy suffered hundreds of casualties, both dead and wounded. In Northeast and Southern Mindanao alone, the enemy suffered close to 400 casualties, including 153 killed in NPA military actions.

The number of NPA fighters has risen to several thousands in Mindanao. The number of platoon formations has continued to grow even as the NPA maintained its company formations in other areas. This year yielded hundreds of new NPA fighters who came from the organized masses in the countryside and activist ranks in the cities, particularly from the youth

and students.

Building on the NPA's strength, the power of the people's democratic government continued to grow in the guerrilla fronts. Organs of political power have been established on the municipal and inter-barrio levels and a significant number built on the barrio level. This translates to a mass base of up to 600,000.

Thousands of peasants have benefited from agrarian struggles. Hundreds of barrios have succeeded in reducing usury and rent for land and rice mills, raising wages of agricultural workers and prices of farm products and reducing prices of commodities consumed by the peasantry. Production was developed through mutual exchange of labor and communal groups as well as other forms of cooperation.

The Lumad and Moros succeeded in defending their ancestral lands against widespread landgrabbing by big comprador bourgeois elements, landlords and foreign corporations.

Mass campaigns staged in the barrios to promote health, literacy and culture were likewise successful with the active participation of the masses. Hundreds of peasants also availed of mass clinics launched in their areas.

The people's militia registered continuous growth. In the more advanced barrios, there is now at least one squad of militia actively performing various aspects of military work.

**In NEMR.** Villages included in the Red guerrillas' areas of operation expanded by 19% in North Eastern Mindanao, covering all the strategic areas in the region. The number of organized masses grew by 35% while NPA influence has expanded towards town centers and cities.

Among the victories achieved by the NPA and the revolutionary movement in the region was the

mobilization of the masses for agrarian revolution, which benefited up to 80,000 people. The guerrillas were also able to reduce usury and rent for land and farm equipment. Agricultural workers' wages were raised along with the prices of agricultural products while consumer prices were reduced. In some areas, Lumad communities successfully asserted their right to self-determination. Areas of cooperation and alliance work among the middle forces, including pro-people politicians and bureaucrats also expanded, resulting in the further strengthening of people's revolutionary power in the entire region.

NPA membership grew by 10%. From January 2008 to March 2009, Red fighters were able to launch 84 tactical offensives—from the islands of Siargao to Tubay, Agusan del Norte to Tagasaka, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur. The NPA fighters were able to seize high-powered weapons enough to arm a regular-size platoon. The enemy suffered deaths the equivalent of a company in contrast to seven Red fighters martyred. The NPA succeeded in sustaining the expansion and consolidation of the mass base and in waging agrarian revolution while honing its military skills.

**In Eastern Visayas.** The most striking victory of the NPA in Eastern Visayas is its defeat of the US-Arroyo regime's OBL2. Contrary to the AFP's arrogant claims that it had defeated the revolutionary movement in the region, not a single NPA unit was crushed despite the AFP's widespread military operations in the region.

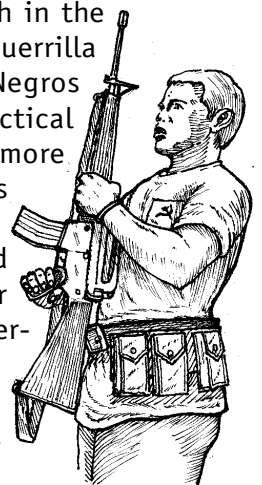
In 2008, the NPA guerrillas staged more than 60 military actions, killing 75 enemy troops and wounding hundreds of others.

**In Panay.** The revolutionary mass base increased by 30% while the capabilities of mass organiza-

tions likewise improved. New peasant groups were formed, empowering the people to solve problems commonly encountered in the villages ranging from issues regarding production to peace and order, education and health. These revolutionary organizations are also at the core of the people's struggle to defend their land, including the ancestral lands of the Tumanduk, which the Philippine Army 3rd ID has long been trying to seize. There has also been a remarkable increase in the number of barrios and town centers covered by the NPA's areas of operation—both in old and recovered areas.

Since 2002, membership in the NPA has more than doubled while the people's militia has also grown in size, reaching an equivalent of two battalions. Sixty-six tactical offensives were launched by the NPA, killing 40 enemy troops and seizing 46 weapons of various caliber.

**In Negros.** The NPA overcame one of the most vicious AFP attacks in the history of the revolutionary movement in the region. Negros was one of the priority areas of the US-Arroyo regime's OBL2. Pursuant to its plans, several military units were deployed to the island in a vain attempt to crush the revolutionary movement in Negros. But instead of being vanquished, the revolutionary movement has, in fact, continued to gain strength in the island. NPA guerrilla fighters in Negros staged 51 tactical offensives, more than in previous years. The mass base expanded and the number of people's guerrillas grew, as did the number of guerrilla fronts.





**In Southern Tagalog.** Not a single guerrilla front in the region was destroyed in the provinces where OBL2 concentrated its fury. The temporary setbacks the guerrilla fronts faced were not due to massive military operations but to internal organizational problems and erroneous policies. The guerrillas were eventually able to study the particular characteristics of OBL2 in the region, on which they based the appropriate measures they took to resist it.

The comrades learned from the revolutionary forces' wealth of experience in Mindoro island which suffered serious hardships and setbacks due to OBL1 under the fas-

cist reign of Col. Jovito Palparan. The revolutionary movement in the island has gradually recovered areas that had temporarily been abandoned and continues to gather strength.

The US-Arroyo regime has also failed to crush the guerrilla fronts in Quezon despite a series of encirclement and annihilation campaigns launched in the province.

The last six months of the previous year yielded the most remarkable results in thwarting OBL2 in the region. Among the most brilliant tactical offensives at that time were the successful raid on the Quezon Provincial Jail that freed seven political detainees and

an ambush in Rodriguez, Rizal. Nineteen big and small military actions were also launched, which resulted in the seizure of 71 firearms, 29 of which were high-powered rifles. Two AFP soldiers were killed, six others were wounded and three police officers were captured by the NPA.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary masses in the guerrilla zones and fronts continue to benefit from the significant victories of agrarian revolution and have thwarted the dirty maneuvers of counterrevolutionary groups like Akbayan which aim to deceive the people with their reformist delusions on reactionary land reform. AB

## Enemy forces suffer 25 casualties

**T**he reactionary government's armed minions suffered 25 casualties, including 21 government troops killed in various military actions by the New People's Army (NPA) in Bicol, Panay and Southern Mindanao as March came to a close. The NPA also seized two pistols from the bandit Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA) in Negros.

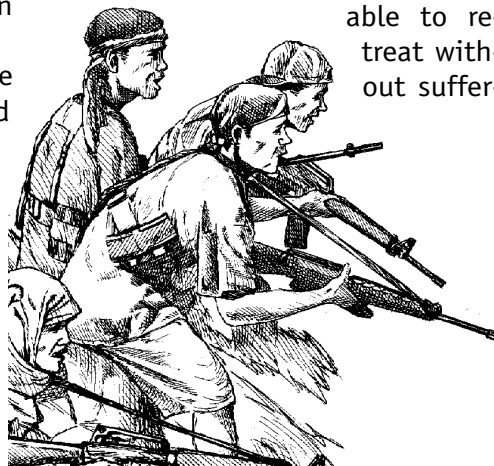
**April 1.** Red fighters ambushed several soldiers aboard four motorcycles in Upper Sta. Cruz, Ragay, Camarines Sur, killing three Scout Rangers and elements of the 31st IB and wounding two others. The attack took place at around 4:30 p.m. as the soldiers were headed towards the Ragay town center.

**March 31.** An element of the Philippine Army 47th IB was killed and two soldiers were wounded in an encounter with an NPA unit at 11:55 a.m. in Barangay Buri, Tapaz, Capiz. The enemy soldiers were conducting a military operation when the firefight occurred.

**March 27.** Five government troops were confirmed dead in

an ambush by the Tomas Pilapil Command of the NPA on a sea vessel of the Philippine Army patrolling the northern part of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur at 9:00 a.m. The enemy soldiers also suffered an undetermined number of wounded. The NPA was

able to retreat without suffer-



ing any casualties.

Earlier, six soldiers were killed when an NPA squad fired shots at the 7th Scout Ranger Company detachment in San Isidro, Bulan, Sorsogon at around 1 a.m.

**March 26.** Three Scout Ranger elements were killed when an NPA platoon seized the initiative from about 20 soldiers laying siege to the guerrillas in Sitio Binilangan, Barangay Bulacao, Gubat, Sorsogon. The Red fighters and the enemy soldiers were locked in a 20-minute gunbattle before the entire NPA force retreated to safety. To cover up their shame, the Scout Rangers claimed that the bodies they loaded onto a six-wheeler truck in Barangay Bulacao were those of NPA guerrillas.

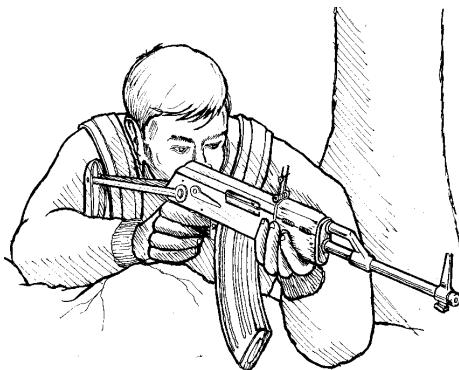
**March 25.** An AFP soldier was wounded in a 15-minute clash between NPA guerrilla forces and elements of the 28th IB in Sitio Tagaras, Barangay Maragatas, Lupon, Davao Oriental.



Meanwhile, a CAFGU element was killed and several others were wounded in a firefight between the NPA and the military in Baganga, Davao Oriental in the first week of March.

**March 22-23.** NPA fighters carried out two successive harassment operations against troops of the 901st Bde conducting "mass meetings" in Barangay Sta. Cruz and Barangay Trece Martires in Casiguran, Sorsogon. Two were monitored to have died on the enemy side after an eight-minute harassment operation. The Red fighters safely withdrew.

**March 14.** The NPA seized firearms in a raid on the houses of Fernando Aninang, a former barangay captain of Panguiranan village in Balud town, Masbate and the barrio's incumbent village chief. The firearms, which were being used by Aninang and his cohorts in illegal fishing were composed of an M16 rifle, a carbine, two .45 caliber pistols, a 9 mm caliber pistol, a .22 caliber rifle, two shotguns (one of which was homemade), several magazines and rounds of ammunition. Aninang and his henchmen also serve as "intelligence assets" of the Balud-PNP and the 506th Provincial Mobile Group against the revolutionary movement. They give out monthly payments to protect the PNP in Balud and in Camp Boni Serrano.



## NPA releases 3 policemen

The Narciso Antazo Aramil Command of the New People's Army (NAAC-NPA) released three policemen captured in a firefight on January 3 in Rodriguez, Rizal. Custody of Insp. Rex Cuntapay, P01 Marvin Agasen and P01 Alberto Umali was turned over to Bishop Gabriel Reyes of the Diocese of Antipolo, Sen. Jamby Madrigal, provincial officials of Rizal and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross on March 27.

The release of the three prisoners of war (POW) pushed through despite intense military operations by the AFP and PNP in the area. The policemen were in good condition when freed by the NPA in a mountainous area in Rizal.

The three policemen recounted that they had been treated well by the NPA throughout their 83 days in captivity. The policemen's families expressed their immense gratitude to the NPA for the release.

An investigation by the NPA revealed that the three prisoners of war were not guilty of any heinous crimes against the people. Comrade Fidel Agcaoili, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) Negotiating Panel commended the Red fighters, the NAAC-NPA commander, Sen. Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal, Gov. Casimiro Ynares III, Bishop Gabriel Reyes of Antipolo City, Bishop Emilio Marguez of Lucena City and the ICRC for facilitating the release of the three prisoners of war.

Agcaoili then challenged the Arroyo regime to match the humane treatment accorded the prisoners and the goodwill measure undertaken by the NDFP by releasing detained NDFP consultants or surfacing if not admitting custody over disappeared comrades so that the long-stalled peace talks could be resumed. AB

**March 5.** A unit under the Leonardo Panaligan Command of the NPA seized two .45 caliber pistols, several documents and other paraphernalia in an assault on the headquarters of the RPA bandit group in Barangay Hibaiyo, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. The raid served as punishment on the RPA for all its abuses against the people.

Local residents have long complained of the RPA's extortion activities such as its collection of P50 weekly and its imposition of a P500 fine on those who do not attend the "mass meetings" called by the RPA. The RPA serves as a secu-

rity force for the Chan family, owners of Hacienda Paz. It also protects the cockfarm of RPA chief commander Stephen Paduano (a.k.a. Carapali Lualhati).

The RPA has also seized the lands of legitimate land reform beneficiaries by exchanging genuine land titles with fake ones, rendering landless a number of peasants who have long been tilling their farms.

The Philippine Army has also been using the RPA as surveillance units and guides in military operations and to sow fear and intrigues among the people. AB

# Fascist killings claim 1 victim per week

**P**olitical killings in the country are once more on the rise, claiming an average of one victim per week, according to KARAPATAN secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez. She revealed this alarming trend during a hearing conducted by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on April 1 in Davao City regarding Rebelyn Pitao's murder. Rebelyn, a teacher, was the daughter of prominent New People's Army (NPA) commander Leoncio "Ka Parago" Pitao. She was abducted, tortured, raped

and eventually killed by military agents on March 4.

KARAPATAN has reported 17 documented cases of extrajudicial killings in the first quarter of the year alone. Following are some of the latest cases of fascist killings

## CPP congratulates Ka Joema for dismissal of murder charge

**T**he Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) congratulated CPP founding chair Jose Maria "Ka Joema" Sison for succeeding in having a 2007 criminal case against him in The Netherlands dismissed on March 31. This decision was confirmed by Dutch Prosecution Service officials in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Ka Joema, 70, attained a "decisive legal victory" against all attempts of the imperialists, the puppet Arroyo regime and counterrevolutionary traitors to hail him to court by slapping trumped-up charges against him, added the CPP. The favorable decision came about because Ka Joema was able to put up a strong defense with the help of his Dutch lawyers led by Michiel Pestman and the support of his Filipino lawyers led by Romeo T. Capulong, said NDFP Peace Panel chair Ka Luis Jalandoni.

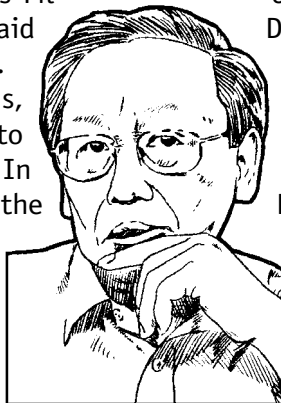
The Arroyo regime and its minions, namely National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales have refused to accept defeat. In fact, Gonzales announced on April 2 that the Arroyo government will persist in looking for ways to have Sison deported from The Netherlands in order to force him to face criminal charges in the Philippines. (Sison was forced into exile in The Netherlands in 1987 while on a speaking tour in Europe following the cancellation of his passport and his inclusion in a list of wanted personalities by the Aquino regime. Since then, a series of cases have been filed against him and several assassination at-

tempts perpetrated by government agents. The latest among this string of charges implicates him in the killing of counterrevolutionary renegades Romulo Kintanar in 2003 and Arturo Tabara in 2004.

Jalandoni lambasted Gonzales, saying he was ignorant of the 1992 and 1995 decisions of The Netherlands' highest administrative court, the Raad van State upholding Ka Joema's status as a political refugee under Article 1A of the "The Refugee Convention." This places him under the full protection of Article 3 of the "European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" which forbids his return to the Philippines as it is highly probable that he will be persecuted or subjected to cruel and unusual punishment, added Jalandoni.

Jalandoni also revealed that even before the Dutch police arrested Ka Joema on August 28, 2007, Dutch prosecutors had connived with the Arroyo regime, specifically with Gen. Eduardo Ermita and Norberto Gonzales to manufacture evidence at the US Embassy, Dutch Embassy and the former US military base in Clark Field (Pampanga), as well as in The Netherlands, to strengthen their trumped-up case. But all these attempts were in vain.

Ka Joema continues to provide inspiration to the Filipino people in waging revolution against the oppressive and exploitative system of the Philippine reactionary state and advancing the proletarian revolution and anti-imperialist struggles in the world, said the CPP. AB





and other military abuses gathered by *Ang Bayan*.

**April 2.** Up to 500 families coming from farflung barangays of Alamada, North Cotabato fled their homes to avoid being caught in the crossfire as clashes continue between Arroyo government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Reports revealed that the evacuees are taking shelter in public schools and barangay halls of three contiguous villages, some 15 kilometers away from Barangay Upper Dado, where the firefight began on March 31.

**March 31.** It was 10:45 a.m. when two fascist soldiers aboard a motorcycle gunned down Edeline "Eden" Jerus, 37, in her home in Barangay San Juan Roro, Sorsogon City. She was serving food to her two children aged eight and ten when the gruesome murder took place.

Jerus, a member of Hustisya-Sorsogon, was the main witness to the brutal killing of her husband Willy, a leader of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas in the province who was shot to death on April 16, 2007.

**March 25.** Anti-riot policemen violently dispersed a rally spearheaded by GABRIELA activists at the US Embassy, hurting some 20 people, most of them women. They were conducting a peaceful assembly to protest the continued presence of American troops in the Philippines when the brutal dispersal took place. The women's alliance filed a complaint against Manila Police District chief Supt. Roberto Rosales with the Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the Ombudsman.

**March 23.** A fascist henchman

armed with a .45 caliber pistol killed Sabina Ariola, 51, chairperson of Mamamayan ng Sta. Rosa para sa Kagalingan, Kaunlaran, Kapayapaan, Tungo sa Magandang Kinabukasan ng Bayan (MSRK3). Ariola, who was with other MSRK3 staff aboard an Isuzu Elf bound for the city, was shot in Barangay Pook, Sta. Rosa, Laguna at around 8:00 a.m. The urban poor leader, who was hit in the stomach was immediately brought to a hospital but she died that evening. Her brutal slay was preceded by the assassination of former MSRK3 chairperson Mely Carvajal who was also shot to death in 2004. Ariola is the 171st victim of extrajudicial killings in Southern Tagalog since Gloria Arroyo came to power in 2001.

**March 23.** Soldiers of the 22nd IB ransacked the houses of Gawo and Henson Paone, Moling Estrada and Celia Herbes, all residents of Barangay Togawe, Gubat, Sorsogon. The soldiers stole clothes from the Paone home and left other household items in disarray. The military also forcibly entered Estrada's house and took his picture. Soldiers also took pictures of and interrogated Herbes about the whereabouts of the NPA. The warrantless house searches were carried out following two clashes between the Philippine Army and the NPA.

Even before the gunfights occurred, military agents of the 901st Brigade had set up a Barangay Defense System (BDS) in the villages of Casiguran, Sorsogon where the barriofolk were made to report about suspected allies of the revolutionary movement.

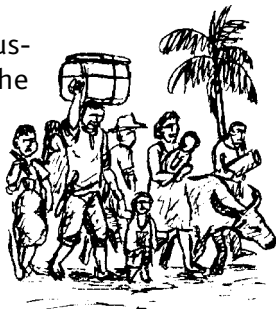
The military has also been con-

ducting "mass meetings" aimed at setting up BDS in the villages of Irosin, Sorsogon. Soldiers have also been threatening the families of suspected NPA members.

**February 25.** Elements of the 31st IB fired at and wounded a civilian as the latter and his uncle were fleeing from an ongoing gunbattle between the military and the NPA in San Rafael, Lupi, Camarines Sur. Soldiers continued to shoot at Camarines Sur People's Organization member and San Rafael barangay councilor Marlo Perez and his uncle despite Perez's cries that they were civilians.

Perez's uncle managed to run towards the barrio center to seek help. The wounded Perez called out to the government troops when they went past him. Instead of helping him, however, the soldiers even held him on his wounded side, ordered him to kneel and beat him up. Worse, the fascist soldiers forced him to walk, but because he was too weak, he stumbled. The military then began interrogating him, forcing him to say he was an NPA member. In the end, a soldier finally bandaged his wound. Barangay officials of San Rafael arrived at 5:30 p.m. and took Perez home. But when they reached the barangay, Perez was forcibly taken by the soldiers, loaded onto a military truck and brought to the Sipocot District Hospital. He was transferred to the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City in the evening.

The following morning, February 26, a certain Captain Avila visited Perez, claiming that he was sent by the battalion commander of the 31st IB to find out what kind of assistance he needed. No assistance has so far arrived from the military. Perez plans to file criminal charges against the government soldiers who shot him. **AB**





# MAC files formal charges before people's court against Arroyo regime officials for Rebelyn Pitao slaying

**T**he Merardo Arce Command (MAC) of the New People's Army (NPA) in Southern Mindanao formally filed a case before the people's court against 12 officers, elements and agents of the Military Intelligence Battalion; four officers, elements and agents of the Military Intelligence Group XI of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and the highest-ranking officers of the Eastern Mindanao Command, 10th Infantry Division and Armed Forces of the Philippines for the abduction, torture, rape and murder of Rebelyn Pitao. Also charged were Gen. Eduardo Ermita and commander-in-chief Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The case which involves war crimes, crimes against humanity and other grave vio-

lations of human rights was formally filed on March 29.

MAC said in a statement released on the same date the case was filed, that the abduction, torture, rape and murder of Rebelyn Pitao serves the interests of a regime that uses its armed forces to quell dissent, silence its critics, sow state terrorism and suppress the surging tide of revolution.

A special group formed to investigate Rebelyn's murder has found prima facie evidence to file charges against the following individuals:

- ▶ Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
- ▶ Gen. Eduardo R. Ermita
- ▶ Gen. Alexander B. Yano
- ▶ Maj. Gen. Raymundo B. Ferrer
- ▶ Maj. Gen. Reynaldo B. Mapagu
- ▶ Sgt. Ben Tipait alias Edmar
- ▶ Sgt. Romeo Marcos alias Adan

Sulao

- ▶ Colonel Caguiwa
- ▶ Sgt. Romeo Carreon
- ▶ Sgt. Helvin Bitang
- ▶ Cpl. Orly Pedregoza
- ▶ Cpl. Winnie Carampatana
- ▶ Sgt. Melvin Punla
- ▶ Major Cabanalan
- ▶ Sergeant Caballero

Aside from those listed, also included among the accused are other agents, elements and officers of the Military Intelligence Battalion of the 10th Infantry Division of the AFP known as Hagto, Embac, alias Ariel, alias Benjak, Reynaldo Desales alias Jomar, Sergeant Senit and other John and Jane Does.

In particular, the aforementioned are accused of violating Article 48 of Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions which prohibits the use of the civilian population and civilian facilities as military targets; Article 51, Paragraph 2 of Article 13 and Paragraph 2 of Protocol II prohibiting acts of violence and threats where the primary objective is to spread terror among the civil-

## Suspects in Rebelyn's slaying incriminate themselves

**G**rounds for suspecting the men named by Ka Parago as responsible for his daughter Rebelyn's murder grew stronger after some of them were caught in the tangled web of their own lies. The men were interviewed during a hearing conducted April 1 in Davao City by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to investigate Rebelyn's killing.

CHR chair Atty. Leila de Lima first questioned Cpl. Helvin Bitang of the Military Intelligence Battalion (MIB). Bitang claimed that he found out about Rebelyn's death on March 5 while he was watching the news on television. In fact, it was only before nightfall on March 5 that Rebelyn's body was discovered and it was only on the morning of March 6 that news of this broke out to the media.

Bitang added that he was ordered to report to his battalion commander on the morning of March 6 because there were announcements in the news that he was a suspect in the case. However, the names of the people suspected of involvement in the crime only came out in the media on March 9, a day after they were disclosed by Ka Parago in an interview with selected media personnel.

March 8, on the other hand, was the date Cpl. Orly Pedregoza said he found out that he was a suspect in the death of Rebelyn.

Sgt. Martin Punla stated that his job is to provide protection to VIPs. When De Lima asked him where he was when Rebelyn was abducted and killed, he said he was in Tagum City on March 4 and in Davao City on March 5. But he said he couldn't remember which VIP he was protecting on those dates and what kind and color of vehicle they used.

AB



ian population; Part III, Article 6, Paragraph 1 of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights which states that every human being has the inherent right to life, that this right shall be protected by law and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

The accused will be tried in accordance with International Humanitarian Law and the revolutionary legal and judicial system,

processes and laws of the People's Democratic Government as well as pursuant to the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and the NDFP declaration of compliance with provisions of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I.

The rights of the accused under International Humanitarian Law will be respected, including the

right to prepare and mount a defense, the right to counsel and the right to appeal any decision of the court.

Meanwhile, along with the revolutionary legal and judicial processes of the people's democratic government, the tactical offensives of the NPA and the advancement of the revolutionary movement will serve the interests of justice. AB

## 2 guerrillas arrested in Southern Mindanao found in Leyte

**T**wo of three New People's Army (NPA) cadres arrested in Southern Mindanao in January have been located in a Leyte jail.

Ruel Cabales, Catherine Guinoo-Cacdac and Nelson Carbajosa were arrested by soldiers at a house in Sitio Pulanglupa, Barangay Ngan, Compostela Valley in the early morning of January 26. They were in the area to help resolve longstanding disputes among the masses.

In a sworn statement, Cabales and Cacdac said they were brought to the 10th ID headquarters in Camp Panacan, Davao City after their arrest and were subjected to intense torture and interrogation for a week.

Their families filed a petition for a writ of amparo which was approved on February 26. In accordance with the court order, relatives of the three victims as well as members of various organizations inspected the 66th IB camp in New Bataan, Compostela Valley on March 17 but did not find them there.

Meanwhile, Cabales and Cacdac were moved from one place to the next and were videotaped in a staged surrender. They were also forced to sign documents stating they surrendered and were not arrested.

On March 25, they were brought to the Surigao City pier and put on board a ship sailing for Ormoc City. From there, they were taken directly to the Leyte Provincial Jail in Barangay Kauswagan, Palo, Leyte where they were informed that they were among the accused in a multiple murder case in Baybay, Leyte even if it was their first time to ever set foot in Leyte. Their whereabouts were discovered only when other political detainees in the provincial jail informed Karapatan-Eastern Visayas of the arrival of Cabales and Cacdac.

The human rights group Hustisya strongly condemned the 10th ID's trickery and deceit and its continued refusal to release the three victims even after the court had granted their families' petition for a writ of amparo.

Meanwhile, Hustisya has yet to confirm news that Carbajosa, the third victim, is under the custody of a barangay captain in Kapatagan, Digos City. AB

## Filipino-Americans oppose VFA

PROTESTS against the continuation of the US-RP Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) echoed throughout the US as Filipino-American activists demanded the junking of the agreement in a big rally at the headquarters of the US Department of Defense on Arlington Street, Washington D.C. last March 21. This anti-war protest action by members of BAYAN-USA, GABRIELA Network, Alliance Philippines and other Filipino-American organizations coincided with the sixth anniversary of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Together with various organizations and personalities who are against the jingoist policies of the US, the Filipino-American activists condemned the ongoing US occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and its support of Israel against Palestine. The activists carried mock coffins symbolizing the casualties of America's war of aggression.

About 10,000 people attended the mobilization, making it the biggest since Barack Obama took office as president of the US. AB



## Philippines ranks 6th in number of slain journalists

THE Philippines placed sixth out of 14 countries that have the most cases of killings of media members in which the perpetrators have not been punished. This is according to the 2009 Global Impunity Index of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). CPJ announced this in a press conference on March 23 organized by the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists and the Southeast Asia Press Alliance.

There are 24 media personnel killed in the Philippines in the last ten years who have yet to attain justice. The CPJ has demanded that the Arroyo government take concrete steps to give justice to the slain journalists and protect members of the media in the country. It refuted Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita's statement that the cases of the 24 slain journalists were already being properly attended to because, said the CPJ, not one of the suspects has been convicted.

The CPJ is an international organization that protects freedom of expression. Every year, it issues a list of journalists killed worldwide whose murderers continue to go scot-free.

First on the list of countries that are most dangerous for journalists is Iraq where at least 88 reporters have been killed since its occupation by the US in 2003.

Second is Sierra Leone, third is Somalia, fourth is Sri Lanka and fifth is Colombia. **AB**

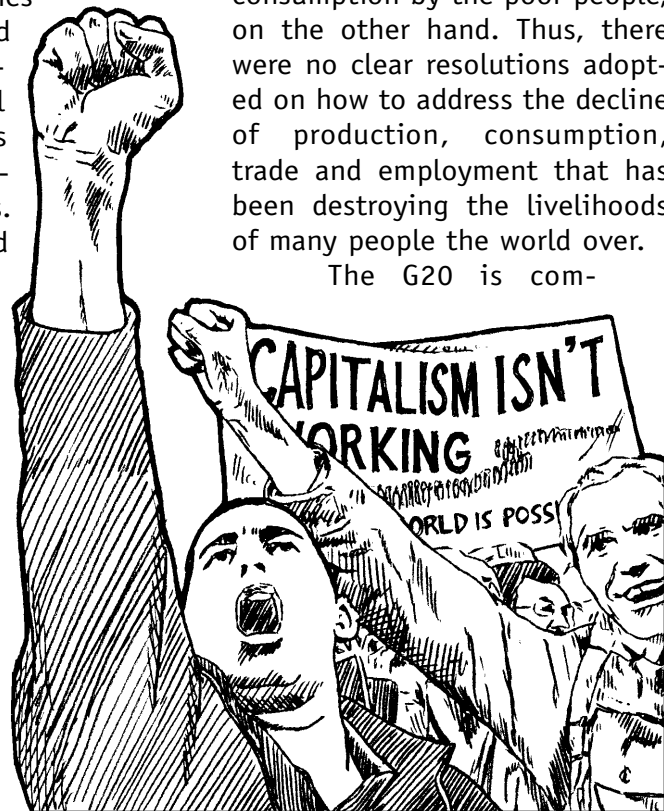
## G20's worthless resolutions

Just as expected, the resolutions arrived at during the meeting of the Group of 20 (G20) held on April 1-2 in London were irrelevant to the suffering people of the world.

The meeting of the 20 largest and richest countries of the world focused on the lack of regulation of financial capital and how this led to various anomalies and excesses. The G20 thus agreed that the main method of resolving the current crisis would be the creation of an international system of regulation. This, however, has also come to nought as the G20 also agreed not to impose tight restrictions on banks as long as the current crisis exists.

The G20 only superficially touched on the more important and key issues concerning the problems faced by the real economy which result from the cyclical problem of overproduction on the one hand, and the lack of consumption by the poor people, on the other hand. Thus, there were no clear resolutions adopted on how to address the decline of production, consumption, trade and employment that has been destroying the livelihoods of many people the world over.

The G20 is com-



## Balikatan worsens prostitution in Bicol

SEN. Francis Pangilinan has revealed that women have been making nightly visits to American soldiers involved in the Balikatan exercises in Bicol. A reporter from Legazpi City passed the information to him on April 1.

According to witnesses, the American soldiers receive eight to ten women twice nightly at the hotel where they are currently staying in the city. Pangilinan cited this as additional evidence of the debauchery brought about by the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) to the Philippines.

The senator plans to file a resolution to investigate worsening prostitution and other illegal activities resulting from the presence of foreign soldiers in the country.

GABRIELA, Bayan Muna, BAYAN and other patriotic and democratic organizations also assailed the worsening exploitation of Filipino women as a result of the Balikatan and VFA. **AB**



pletely blind to the fact that it is the imperialist policy of "free trade" globalization that has brought unequaled hardship and oppression to the majority of the people of the world in the last decade. By implementing this policy, the imperialists are trampling on national economies, bleeding natural resources dry, exploiting the toiling masses and destroying the productive forces of semicolonial and backward countries. Even as they have been forcing many developing countries to implement "free trade" globalization, the imperialist countries have themselves become stricter in implementing various forms of protectionism. The G20 did absolutely nothing to put a stop to this.

The multi-trillion dollar "economic stimulus program" which is primarily being implemented by the US is an artificial and superficial solution to the depression besetting the world economy. The US and the UK want to prioritize

such programs and insist that the G20 support this on an international plane. The G20 has refused to do so, saying it would lead to inflation. In any case, the decision on whether or not to go through with such measures has been left to the discretion of individual governments.

The G20 promised to raise an additional \$1.1 trillion fund to be placed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ostensibly to help countries hit by the current crisis. The amount will supposedly be lent to impoverished countries. In reality, however, almost 90% of it will be allotted to the richest countries, while the numerous developing nations will have to divide the remaining 10% among themselves. Worse, poor countries that had hoped to benefit from this fund are required to meet very strict conditions imposed by the IMF which redound to the imperialist agency having decisive control over the economy of the debtor country. **AB**

## Heated protests at the G20 meeting

**L**arge, widespread and heated protests greeted the meeting of Leaders of G20 in London on April 1 and 2. For two days, thousands of people marched and camped out in the streets and in London's banking and financial center to assail the G20 meeting. There was also a huge attendance in simultaneous protests taking place in various cities throughout Europe.

Unions, environmentalist organizations and peace advocates, charitable institutions, students and other activists came together to oppose the economic crisis afflicting the vast majority of the world's peoples and assail monopoly capitalists and imperialist leaders for their responsibility for this crisis. They demanded that the people should be the first recipients of any assistance and not those who were responsible for the crisis.

They condemned the use of mailed fist policies to suppress the people's right to air their grievances. One protester has died and many more were wounded and arrested. **AB**

## NorthRail Project to displace thousands of families by June

UP to 18,455 families presently residing along the old tracks of the Philippine National Railways from the City of Malolos in Bulacan to Mabalacat in Pampanga will be displaced by June of this year as the 50-kilometer Section 2 of the \$1.317 billion NorthRail Project reaches completion. Road clearing for the construction of the railway is part of a modern mass transit project that will connect Metro Manila to the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport Clark Freeport in Pampanga.

Although National Housing Authority general manager Federico Laxa has pledged that those affected by the project will be moved to government housing units, many families living along the railroad tracks are worried about what would befall them once they move to the relocation sites. They are aware of the many complaints regarding the lack of services like electricity, water and toilets, not to mention the fact that they will be living far from their places of work.

If the NorthRail project is completed, it will be the single biggest government project causing the most widespread dislocation because as many as 41,000 families will be affected. The areas covered by the project are the cities of Malabon, Caloocan and Valenzuela in Metro Manila; Meycauayan, Mari-lao, Bocaue, Balagtas, Guiguinto and Malolos in Bulacan; and Apalit, San Simon, San Luis, the City of San Fernando, Angeles City and Mabalacat in Pampanga. There have already been 23,386 families evicted from Section 1 since 2007.

## **Migrant workers slam Arroyo**

MIGRANTE International strongly criticized Gloria Arroyo for relentlessly pursuing agreements with various countries as a way of resolving rising unemployment among migrants. Instead of finding jobs overseas, the Arroyo government should focus its attention on how to create numerous jobs in the Philippines, said Migrante.

According to Migrante International, it is impossible for Filipino

workers to return to their jobs because companies in many countries have shut down as a result of the worsening economic crisis. Based on the government's own data, there are as many as 19,936 retrenched migrants. Particularly in Taiwan, there are already 6,528 unemployed Filipinos, according to records from the Manila Economic and Cultural Office on April 2.

Migrante also protested plans

by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to recruit the thousands of returning migrants that were retrenched from their jobs. It said that the AFP will just turn them into mercenary fascist soldiers who will only serve the interests of the big comprador bourgeoisie and other ruling classes. It is an insult to turn those considered the "new heroes" of the country into mere henchmen of the military.

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## **CPP hails DPRK for successful satellite launch**

THE Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) congratulated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for its successful launch of a communications satellite into space on April 5. The CPP also condemned the US and its allies for misrepresenting this launch as a missile test and for ac-

tually provoking hostilities with the DPRK.

The satellite launch is just one of the advanced technologies developed by the DPRK in its effort to defend itself against attacks of the US and other imperialist powers. The DPRK has successfully developed industry and weaponry

based on nuclear technology which was previously monopolized by the imperialists. With DPRK's launch of the communications satellite, it has also broken imperialist monopoly over the international dissemination of propaganda and messaging using modern media.